BRICK AND MORTAR:

A HISTORY OF NEWTON, KANSAS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many members of the Newton community contrihuted time and knowledge to this project. During the summer and fall of 1983, forty persons volunteered as surveyors for an inventory of the huildings in Newton's commercial district and adjacent residential neighhorhoods. During the next months many of the volunteers continued their involvement in this project as photographers and as research assistants.

Scott Michie of the City of Newton and David A. Haury of the Mennonite Lihrary and Archives served as advisors in hoth the conception and production of this project. Special thanks are extended to Richard Cawthon of the Kansas State Historical Society for providing information ahout Newton's architecture. The Harvey County Historical Society, the Mennonite Library and Archives, and the Newton Fire Department graciously provided original photographs. George Krievins, in consultation with Keith O. Rhoades, A.I.A., prepared the architectural sketches. Preservation of Kansas Landmarks, Inc. permitted the Warkentin House to he used as the cover illustration. Donald Botterweck provided the aerial photograph.

The City of Newton and Bethel College, and the National Park Service, Department of the Interior through the Kansas State Historical Society, provided funds for this puhlication. The contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation hy the Department of the Interior.

Front Cover: Warkentin House

Back Cover: Aerial view of Newton, ca. 1930

Copyright © 1984

Library of Congress Number: 84-07152

(Not for Sale)

BRICK AND MORTAR:

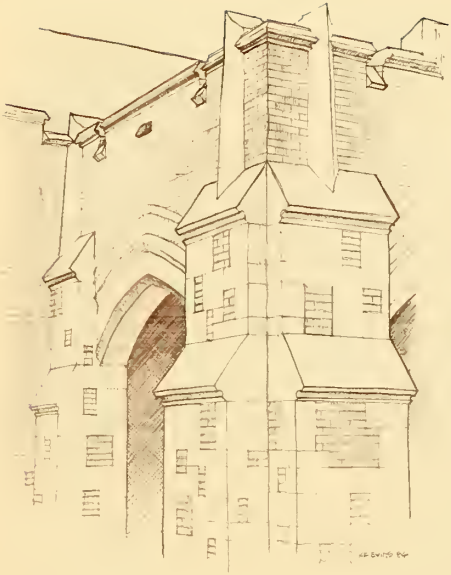
A HISTORY OF NEWTON, KANSAS

By
Rachel Waltner

Mennonite Library and Archives
North Newton, Kansas
In cooperation with the
City of Newton
1984

CHRONOLOGY

August	*1870*	Judge Muse's party reaches the site of Newton
April	*1871*	Walton's blacksmith shop and Luhn's grocery erected
July 17		First passenger train arrives in Newton
August 19		Original town plat filed
August 20		"General Massacre"
February 22	*1872*	Newton incorporated
August		First edition of the *Newton Kansan* printed
September-November		Cattle route shifts south from Newton
	1872-73	Building codes established
	1874	Last buffalo killed in Harvey County
		Arrival of the Mennonites from Russia
	1875	Neal home built at 301 East Fourth
	1878	Newton's population reaches 2,000
	1879	Monarch Steam Mills built
		Santa Fe moves division headquarters from Newton to Nickerson
	1880	First Harvey County jail built
	1882	C.M.E. church built on West Fifth
		Fred Harvey's Arcade and Santa Fe roundhouse completed
		Judge Muse publishes a history of Harvey County
		Newton's population reaches 5,000
	1883	J. J. Krehbiel Carriage Factory built
	1885	Ragsdale Opera House constructed
	1886	Bernhard Warkentin establishes Newton Milling and Elevator Co.; builds home at 211 East First
	1887	Building boom
	1888	Cornerstone of Bethel College Administration Building laid
	1890	Financial panic; failure of Newton National Bank and Newton Street Railway
	1894	Organization of the Commercial Club
	1897	Santa Fe moves division headquarters back to Newton
	1900	Newton's population reaches 8,000
	1904	Carnegie Library completed
	1905	First Mexican family arrives
	1907	Harvey County Courthouse built
	1911	Arkansas Valley Interurban lines reach Newton
	1914	Fire destroys entire business block
	1915	Ragsdale Opera House destroyed by fire
	1925	Railroad Savings and Loan building completed
	1930	Santa Fe builds new depot



Newton's Santa Fe station, built in the Tudor style, is one of several buildings in the community undergoing renovation. Completed in 1930, the station features Gothic pointed arches like the one shown here at the southwest corner of the boarding area. An intricate pattern of brick and stone characterizes the building's exterior walls.

CONTENTS

CHRONOLOGY

INTRODUCTION 2

NEWTON IN 1871: FIRST SEASONS OF SETTLEMENT 3

THE 'WICKEDEST CITY IN THE WEST' 5

THE QUEST FOR STABILITY 7

AGRICULTURE: AN ECONOMIC BASE 11

THE SANTA FE AND HARVEY HOUSE 13

INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS 16

HOMES IN NEWTON 18

THE BUILDING PROCESS: "CARPENTER ECLECTICISM" 19

INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: AN EYE TOWARDS "PROGRESS" 20

NEWTON IN RETROSPECT: HISTORY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION 22

ENDNOTES 26

Introduction

In exploring Newton's past, one is drawn to visual evidence of the community in an earlier day—architecture, landscape, patterns of neighborhood settlement, pictorial records, and material culture. Viewing history from a preservation standpoint demands a sharpened awareness of the interplay between human events and the environment. The building of the community is a primary focus of this study, from the era of virgin prairie lands to the progressive beat of the early twentieth century.

Newton's earliest history is bound with the developments of the Great American West, including the settlement of the prairie, the long cattle drives along the Chisholm Trail, and the westward advance of the railroads. As the community stabilized, within two years of its birth, its changing character reflected technological developments and a maturing economy. Among the milestones of Newton's survival and growth include the prominence of the railroad industry, the introduction of hard winter wheat to the surrounding lands, and the rise of the milling industry.

One perspective which cuts through the many layers of community history is that of the "built environment." By examining the patterns of development of community-building, we can begin to appreciate in historical context the people, events, and cultural values which are intrinsic to Newton's history.

Journey to the Prairie

The emergence of Newton in 1871 is the story of frontier adventure and response to economic opportunity. Critical decisions were taking shape regarding the routes of Texas longhorns and the placement of the Santa Fe Railroad. Newton's history exemplifies the developments of Kansas and western history. In 1871, Newton's significance as a new force on the frontier was symbolized in the threat it posed to two already established central Kansas communities—Abilene, sixty-five miles to the north, and Wichita, populated by three hundred settlers and growing, twenty-seven miles to the south.

Both Abilene and Wichita were located on the Chisholm Trail. Since 1868, Abilene had enjoyed the lion's share of the cattle trade, as cowboys drove their large herds along the Chisholm Trail, destined for Abilene's Kansas Pacific railroad and eastern buyers. With increasing business each season, Abilene boomed, as thousands of drovers, cattle buyers, commission agents, and opportunists flocked to the town.[1]

During the late 1860's and early 1870's, however, stirring activity was taking place along the Chisholm Trail to the south which would shortly undermine Abilene's monopoly of the cattle trade. Although unsettled, the site which would become Newton (at that time, a part of Sedgwick County) was prime land for development by the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. Town promoters in Wichita hoped to attract the railroad to their community, for the prospect of becoming the new railhead cattle town was enticing to nearly every frontier businessman. Indeed, the Wichita promoters had good reason to believe that the railroad was coming their way, since in the spring of 1870 Santa Fe survey agents passed through the community and indicated plans to extend the tracks to Florence, and from there, southwest to Wichita and to the west beyond.[2]

Although Wichita's boosters eventually had their way—the hub of cattle trading moved to Wichita after a branch of the Santa Fe reached there in late 1872—the outcome regarding the cattle trade among Kansas entrepreneurs was uncertain from the years 1870-1872. It was during this period that Newton became a new cowtown to be reckoned with and a terminus for the Santa Fe.

The historic decision by Santa Fe officials to extend their line west from Emporia and Florence to a point north of Wichita in 1871 was the result of a memorable visit to the area by a small party of railroad and land agents. One member of the group was Judge R. W. P. Muse, a West Virginia native who later became one of Newton's most prominent citizens and boosters. Muse had spent his fifty years in various successful enterprises, including attorney, judge, newspaper editor, and real estate agent. Along with AT & SF railroad commissioner D. L. Lakin, Muse left his Topeka office on August 25, 1870, and headed southwest to investigate possibilities for extending the railroad. At Emporia they were joined by a former Kansas governor, land agent Samuel J. Crawford, and an Emporia businessman. With a team and adequate supplies they headed towards the proposed route of the railroad, stopping along the way at the towns and town sites of Cottonwood Falls, Florence, Peabody, Walton, Sedgwick, Park City, and Wichita. A complete account of the journey by Judge Muse is recorded in the 1882 Harvey County atlas.[3] Of the events of August 28, Muse wrote:

> We stopped for dinner at a point on Sand Creek . . . upon the present town site of Newton. Here we were informed by Mr. Lakin that a station or town would be laid out on Section 17 or 19, and liking the country we decided to locate at this point. After driving over both sections we expressed a preference for Section 19, as the town site, and subsequently tried to have the town laid off on that section. Here for the first time we struck the Chisholm . . . and followed it down on the west side of Sand Creek as far as the mouth of the creek, where we found the first settler we had seen in the county, Dr. T. S. Floyd, with whom we staid [sic] all night.[4]

The section which Lakin staked out that day was part of a fertile region. The main river, the Little Arkansas, flowed through the heart of the area, with tributaries Emma, Crooked, Black Kettle, and Sand Creeks. The proposed town site sloped upward from the bank of Sand Creek for a fourth of a mile, and leveled off at a high point.

One of the first sod houses in Harvey County; family unknown.

Muse described the land as having a rich, black sandy topsoil, sloping gradually southeast, the direction in which the area's streams flowed. At the time of the land agents' trip, the prairie landscape was all but treeless, with only scattered cottonwoods growing near the creek beds. As far as the eye could see, the land was covered by blue stem grass, growing in some areas as high as seven feet, surpassing the height of Muse's wagon.

Muse was impressed by the lay of the land, and noted the potential of the rich soil for crops. Of even more immediate interest to the travellers was the diverse animal life of the prairie: "We varied the monotony of the journey by shooting at wolves, coyotes, antelopes, and prairie chickens," he wrote.[5] Most annoying were the buffalo gnats and mosquitos which would continue to besiege both coming settlers and their animals, especially horses and cattle.

Muse also described signs of early settlement found along the way. Closest to the Newton site, the Floyd residence was a recently built log cabin, covered with a sod roof. This solitary symbol of human habitation foreshadowed the changes that were imminent for the prairie landscape. As the group headed back towards Emporia, they no doubt could imagine the building boom that would come to the area which they had designated as a new terminus for the Santa Fe.

In some respects, however, signs of a vanishing frontier were evident some years before Muse's party reached the area. Indians are not believed to have inhabited the area since about 1869, when an Indian battle is supposed to have taken place near Black Kettle Creek east of the Newton town site—legend has it that the Indians were overwhelmed by government troops passing through the area.[6] Buffalo, too, were scarcely present by the time most white settlers moved to the area. The large herds were pushed west by advancing civilization. By the mid 1870's they had left behind only remnants of an earlier way of life in the wilderness, and settlers reported finding tracks and wallows.

Newton in 1871: First Seasons of Settlement

Judge Muse returned to Newton on May 11, 1871 to establish his home, begin a lumber company, and direct the Santa Fe's land interests. By then the new town had been named by a group of the railroad's stockholders for their hometown, Newton, Massachusetts. Entrepreneurs of the

First Santa Fe depot and yard office in Newton, 1872. The depot was built in 1871 along the south side of the tracks, on the east side of Main. An 0-4-0 switch engine is pictured here.

frontier, upon hearing of the Santa Fe's decision to extend to Newton, headed for the new town site as soon as temperatures warmed in the spring of 1871.

The efforts of young Robert Walton to become the community's first builder have become legendary. Walton left his home in Darlington, Wisconsin, for the Kansas prairie, and arrived before the exact location of the new town site was known. Walton hauled lumber from Emporia and had almost completed the building of his blacksmith shop on a site three miles southeast of Newton when he heard that the railroad shops would be located farther northwest. Quickly disassembling his shop, he lugged the wood across the prairie and erected it again, this time on ground that would soon become West Fifth Street, near Main, just two blocks from the railroad site.[7]

Walton's blacksmith shop was joined at that time by other buildings, including Davis and Steele's bakery, a block north of the railroad site, and Peter Luhn's Pioneer Grocery, on the southwest corner of Sixth and Main. The lumber for Luhn's shop and house arrived in late April of 1872, and he hired two carpenters to build it immediately.[8] The building believed to have been first located on the town site was not built in Newton, but was moved in from Florence by a frontier builder named A. F. Horner. It was a storage and supply store, placed in Newton on the northeast corner of Fifth and Main, and moved a year later to Hutchinson. Legend has it that Horner received three monetary prizes for his efforts, in a series of contests sponsored by the railroad company for erecting the first building in each of these new towns.[9]

Judge Muse and his partner, R. M. Spivey, joined the building activity in April, choosing as the site of their land office the block south of the newly laid tracks on the west side of Main. Their building was probably the first in town to be constructed of stone and brick, and they took advantage of the prime location and great demand for building materials to set up a lumber yard on the same block, near their office. Soon lumber began arriving by rail, and in addition to their early enterprises, the firm of Muse and Spivey constructed a horse-powered grain elevator and Newton's first grist mill, both located south of the lumber yard.[10]

Among the first buildings in Newton, several others are noteworthy. The first hotel, operated by S. J. Bentley at the northwest corner of Sixth and Main, was begun in early May and quickly gained a reputation for reasonable lodging as the Newton House. It housed and fed many newcomers to the town, who were generally too occupied in directing their own building and busi-

ness ventures to give immediate attention to housing.[11] Newton House soon had a competitor, the National Hotel.

Samuel Lehman's small hardware store, like other early Newton businesses, was constructed with wood hauled from Florence. It stood near Sixth and Main, measured twenty-five feet across, and extended back to the alley. Before long it was replaced by a two-story brick and stone building. Lehman's business flourished, and extended its contacts to Wichita, El Dorado, and McPherson. In later years it became a major farm implement company.[12] Another early pioneer, Dr. Gaston Boyd, arrived in April 1871, and built a residence and barn along the west side of Main, between Sixth and Broadway. There he established the first medical practice in town and became a major force in civic affairs, including a term as mayor three decades later. In 1873 he expanded his business interests by opening a variety store on Main Street.[13]

Newton in the spring and summer of 1871 was the scene of relentless activity, as "the sound of the saw and hammer could be heard at all hours of the day and night, including Sundays."[14] By June 1, the community numbered about one hundred persons, most of whom camped on the town site. Two months later, population had increased tenfold, and at least two hundred residences had been built or were under construction.[15]

The completion of the railroad line that summer, with the first passenger car arriving into town on July 17, brought to the community a seemingly endless stream of people, lumber, and supplies. The railroad connection also provided daily mail service, as well as an early-morning stock train headed for eastbound trains at Topeka.[16] During the same month, carpenters completed the town's new stockyards and loading chutes for the anticipated cattle trade. In a contract between railroad officials and cattletown architect Joseph G. McCoy, the yards and related buildings were built a mile and a half southwest of Newton, supplemented by a large tract of land to the west for grazing up to 40,000 head of cattle.[17]

With this combination of events, the bulk of the cattle trade was shifted from Abilene to Newton, and from the Kansas Pacific to the Santa Fe. In the months leading up to July, "immense herds of Texas cattle had been passing over the trail, through the town site, en route to Abilene."[18] As the transportation revolution became a reality for Newton, local businesses were blessed with the dollars of sightseers from eastern towns and cowboys hungry for food, drink, and entertainment. By August the town boasted four lumber yards, in addition to ample grocery, drug and dry goods stores, restaurants, twenty-seven saloons, and eight gambling halls.[19]

The earliest buildings to serve this swelling population were primarily frame buildings, erected with lumber hauled from Florence or Emporia. With three to four hundred carloads of lumber arriving on the Santa Fe each month, Newton's construction industry was big business.[20] From established communities to the east came well organized builders, like Emporia's Charles F. Pierce and Topeka's A. F. Horner. Another Topeka contractor named Kullak shipped lumber and sent his carpenters to Newton to do a large share of the community's building. By 1872, when the cattle trade and major railroad terminus shifted to Wichita, Newton's biggest contractors moved their headquarters to that community.[21]

Throughout Newton's brief tenure as the West's new cowtown, however, building along Main Street was the goal of every aspiring businessman. Along the wide road was a mixture of hastily constructed homes and businesses. Despite the lack of planning, some patterns emerged in the first few months. The majority of buildings, both businesses and residences, were located in the three blocks north of the tracks; Main Street lots comprised the central business district. Houses were built along both sides of Main, usually behind the businesses. The most respectable "residential neighborhood"—emerging as early as the summer of 1871—was a cluster of houses three and four blocks north of the Santa Fe tracks. It was an enclave located as far as possible from the railroad and stockyards; and most important, it was far from the seedy gambling and red-light district south of the tracks which was known as Hyde Park.[22]

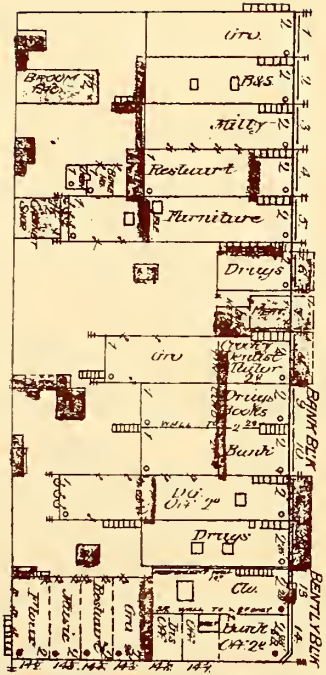
The 'Wickedest City in the West'

Newton's reputation as a town of unprecedented Western violence in its first season has been well documented. Accounts recorded at the time of barroom brawls, murder, and vigilante parties have insured historical interest in Newton, for such events are the stuff of which Western legends are made. In the long run, Newton has not been as widely remembered as later western towns with similarly rowdy reputations, such as Dodge City. Even so, newspapers around and beyond the state referred to the city as "Bloody and Lawless Newton—the Wickedest City in the West."[23] Although the press exaggerated the extent of the violence, at least twelve murders were committed by the end of 1872. Historians in later years referred to Newton's beginnings as a neighborhood of "'soiled doves' and roughs of every nationality and color."[24]

Saloons with names like "The Mint," "Alamo," "Legal Tender," "Bull's Head," "Lone Star," and "Do Drop In" enticed both transients and regular customers. In his 1882 history of the county, Judge Muse related the story of prominent visiting railroad officials who looked in on "The Gold Rooms" on Sunday evening, and reported seeing a wild crowd:

> Whiskey [drinking] and gambling were going on at the bar and around the small tables in front; singing and preaching from a platform in the rear of the building; while in another room were harlots plying their vocation, or peeping through the curtains at the scenes in front.

The visitors reported that the preacher eventually


Meat
Groceries
Harness
Stores, electrical, brass
Grocery
Drugs
Restaurant
Furniture
Drugs
Bank
Drugs
Clo.
Bank
Furniture
Furniture
Furniture

Newton's Main Street in 1880.

The Sanborn Insurance Company documented many American communities beginning in the late nineteenth century. Shown here is a detail of an 1884 Sanborn map of Newton, with Main Street between Sixth and Broadway.

accepted a five dollar bill and a "social glass" for his services, and promised to return.[25]

The most frequently told incident was Newton's "General Massacre"—a series of tragic and sensationalized events spawned by community tensions and barroom violence, which resulted in five murders and six wounded victims.[26] In recent years, the "General Massacre" story has found its way into popular western fiction.[27]

Long after the town settled down and the "rough element" had departed, Newton old-timers piqued the imagination of the younger generation with hair-raising descriptions of Main Street in an earlier time. One early settler, for example, recalled "the nights when the dance halls were flaming and the saloons frothed trouble, when it was best to keep your hand on your holster and your mouth shut, going down that avenue."[28]

The Quest for Stability

Lawlessness in Newton provided the impetus for the formation of Newton's Masonic Lodge in February, 1873. During that month, Newton's town marshall was shot and killed. In response, a group of prominent men organized the lodge to bring order to the community—specifically, they wanted to rid the town of its saloons and gambling halls.[29] This development followed other significant efforts to change Newton's character, particularly the formation of local government and the efforts by permanent residents of the community to gain control of their affairs.

Already in August of 1871, the original town plat had been filed, including the railroad line and surrounding land bound on the north by Twelfth Street, east by Pine, south by First, and west by Ash—a rectangular division laid two blocks wide east of Main, and three along the west side.[30] Six months later, on February 22, 1872, the town was incorporated. A petition signed by 275 of the town's remaining 500 citizens was presented to the district judge who designated Newton as a third class town in Sedgwick County.

Just seven days later, Harvey County, named for then-Kansas governor James M. Harvey, was formed with Newton designated as the new county seat. It included the northernmost sections of Sedgwick County. This political decision, hampered by fraudulent voting, came after months of bitter feuding between Newton and Wichita residents. At stake was control of the Texas cattle trade and the railroads. Wichita was able to raise sufficient county bonds to attract a branch of the Santa Fe to complete its line to Wichita. By the end of 1872, the route of the cattle trade had

shifted south, away from Newton. This change greatly altered the make-up of the community, and came as a relief to a sizeable segment of Newton's residents.[31]

With the pullout of the cattle trade from Newton, an exodus of the rowdiest inhabitants of Newton followed. Drinking and gambling establishments were boarded up as their proprietors and customers moved to Wichita and elsewhere. At the same time, local city fathers began the task of establishing law and order, transforming and promoting their beleaguered community as a civilized settlement on the frontier.

A city council, elected shortly after the incorporation of the town and formation of Harvey County, passed a series of laws almost immediately. Geared towards community improvement, these ordinances set up provisions for sidewalks, parks, a cemetery, and a series of building codes.[32] Sidewalks were decreed the responsibility of property owners, and those who failed to construct the walks according to city specification were fined.

The city council was also concerned with fire hazards posed by the town's numerous wooden structures, and passed several ordinances to minimize the danger, including the construction of brick chimneys two and a half feet above the roof. A more sweeping and controversial code initiated in late 1873 required all buildings and additions between Fourth and Broadway along Main to be constructed with brick and stone. It also specified that buildings have twelve-inch walls and a fire wall half as wide, with either slate or metallic roof.[33]

Greenwood Cemetery was established, and two years later the council extended its affairs to the town's landscaping, designating two city blocks as Themian and Military Parks. The city took responsibility for planting and caring for the shrubbery, fencing the park and constructing sidewalks.[34] The increasing involvement of local government in community affairs signalled the end of Newton's brash, early ways and reflected the settlement of a more stable railroad and agriculture-based community.

First fire station, located on the west side of Poplar between Fourth and Fifth. This photograph may have been taken as early as 1883. All of Newton's firemen before the turn of the century were volunteers. Shown here is a handdrawn hose cart. Horse-drawn wagons became popular beginning around 1901.

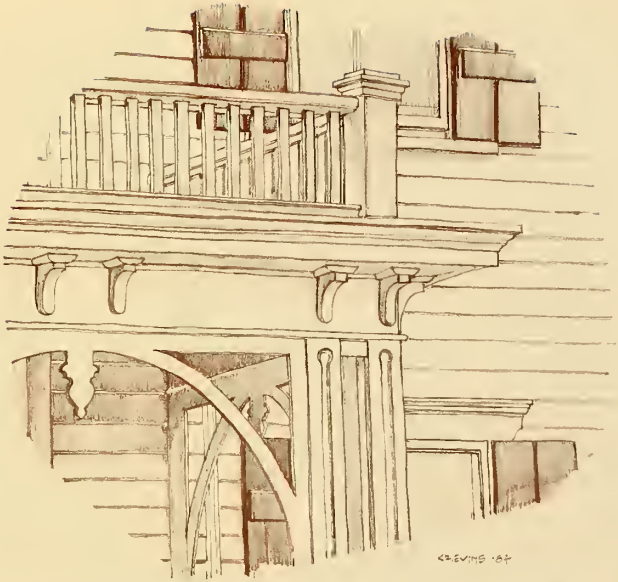
In 1872 and 1873 the editor of the *Newton Kansan*, H. C. Ashbaugh, began his role as promoter of civic duty, reminding readers, "Now is the time to build your sidewalks, if you haven't done so already."[35] Hunting the remaining few buffalo had become a favorite sporting event.[36] Hunters could get about $2.70 for each hide, and in August of 1872 a news item appeared in the *Kansan*: "Buffalo and other wild animals are prohibited from the streets of Newton, by order of the local authorities. Please take heed."[37] During Newton's days as a cowtown, a buffalo

was painted on the sign of a meat shop, and as cowboys passed it they riddled the symbol with gunshots.[38] The last buffalo in the county was killed in 1874.[39]

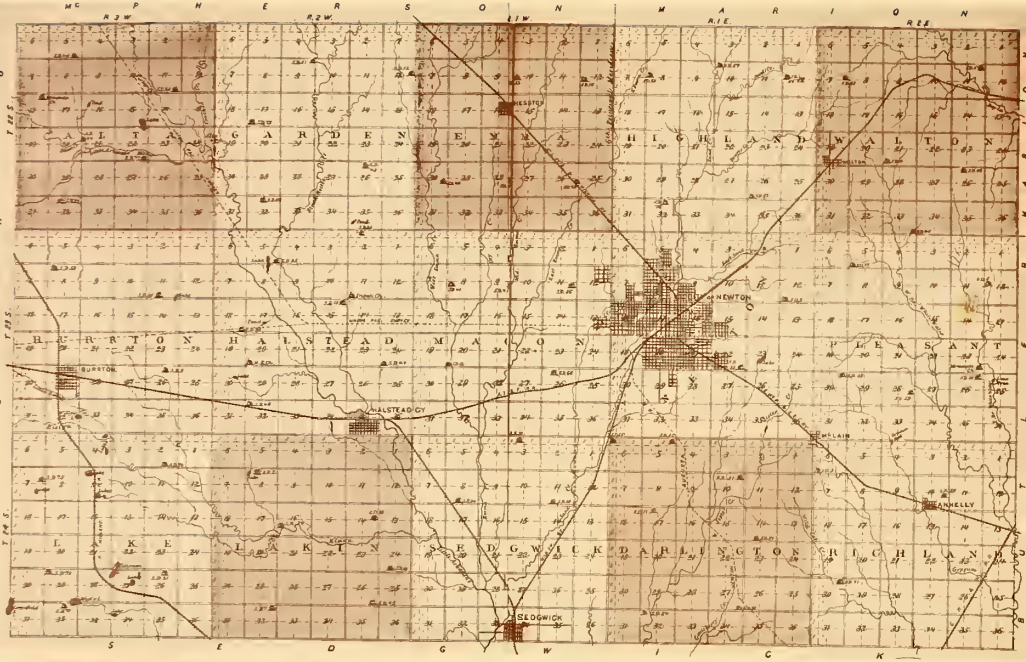
During the mid and late 1870's, pioneers from the east continued to arrive at Newton and surrounding areas, some by covered wagon, others by train. A wave of German-speaking Mennonite immigrants found their way to the Newton area beginning in 1874. Of the new arrivals, not all stayed long—some headed farther westward, and others, after difficult struggles with disease, poverty, harsh weather, and the dreaded grasshopper scourge, headed back to the eastern communities from which they had come.[40]

Many stayed, however, and the attainment of prosperity for some, as well as the growth of the community as a whole, is reflected in the buildings erected during the closing years of the decade. Added to the earliest building establishments were several which would continue to figure prominently in Newton's history, including the town's first large stone building, John Reese Sr.'s drug and jewelry store at the southeast corner of Fifth and Main. Reese had the stone cut to order and shipped in from Florence, at a cost of forty dollars per ton. The second floor of the building was leased by Newton's Masonic Lodge members, who by 1879 had constructed their own Masonic Temple at the corner of Main and Broadway. The Masonic building, still in use, also served as the county courthouse for several years.[41]

Perhaps the crowning achievement of Newton's building efforts in the 1870's was the town's first opera house, a two-story stone building erected in 1878 by Judge Muse's construction firm. With a seating capacity of 500, it was designed for both theater and office space.[42] A report on the affairs of Harvey County and Newton printed in 1879 boasted a population of over 2,000, and "one and two-story brick, stone and frame business houses and residences [which] will compare very favorably with any place of its size in the west." The account noted that the communi-



The Neal residence at 301 East Fourth was built in 1875 by banker and politician Jairus Neal and in the 1880's, Newton Kansan *founder H. C. Ashbaugh lived there. Presently, owners Dwight and Helen Beckham are restoring the home, the only residence in Newton listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Shown here is a detail of the arched porch at the north entrance of the home. In 1928 this porch replaced an earlier, wraparound porch. Above the porch roof is a balustrade with square corner posts.*


MC PHERSON
MARION
R.3 W.
R.2 W.
R.1 W.
R.1 E.
R.2 E.
T.19 S.
T.20 S.
T.21 S.
ALTA
GARDEN
EMMA
HIGHLAND
WALTON
HARVEY
HALSTEAD
MACON
PLEASANT
LAKE
KLEIN
EDGEWICK
DARLINGTON
CHICHLAND
SEDGWICK
NEWTON
HALSTEAD CITY
BURRTON
SEDGWICK
ELBIDA
ELBLAIN
CANNELLY
Santa Fe
Rock Island
Missouri Pacific
Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific
Chicago, Kansas and Nebraska
Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe

ty had four churches and a frame schoolhouse surrounded by farmland which was either being homesteaded or was owned by the railroad. Corn and oats were raised in the county, but the report judged that "wheat succeeds exceedingly well and is the coming crop."[43]

Among the institutions which contributed to Newton's identity and growth in the first decades were its newspapers, the expansion of the railroad and related businesses, and the increasing importance of the agricultural community as an economic foothold for Newton, as wheat production and the milling industry gained prominence. By the turn of the century, a young generation of Newton residents knew only second-hand of the community's original settlement and boisterous legacy. Their Newton had become a farming community as well as a railroad town, with the familiar social, cultural, and political events of industrialized society reflected in the pages of the town's daily newspapers. Buffalo and Texas cattle, cowboys and Indians, had long left the area.

Over the first thirty years of Newton's existence, progress and prosperity had not always been evident. Although the town enjoyed a building boom in 1887, the next ten years reflected a national and international economic depression. Newton's homeowners and businessmen during that time faced grim economic times and their town suddenly seemed overbuilt, staggering under the pressure of mortgages and taxes.[44] The worst moment of financial panic in Newton came in November 1890, when both the Newton National Bank and the Electric Light Company were forced to close.[45] By 1900, in Newton and in the country generally, good economic times were back again and Newton could afford to look ahead.

Map of Harvey County in 1887, from Everts' The Official State Atlas of Kansas, *reprinted in 1982.*

Harvey County Poor Farm in 1914, located four miles west of Main on West Twelfth. Muse and Spivey arranged for the purchase of the land for the county in 1874. Particularly during Newton's early years, paupers lodged there and at their death were buried there at the expense of the county.

Agriculture: An Economic Base

The coming of the Mennonites, first to Halstead in 1873 and then to Newton in 1874, contributed much to shaping Newton's early history. Non-resistant Mennonite familes, in search of religious freedom, had settled in Russia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but began looking for a new home in the early 1870's fol-

The Warkentin Flour Mill, shown prior to its renovation.

lowing the introduction of a universal conscription law in Russia which threatened their non-resistant status. A party of twelve Mennonite leaders made an exploratory trip to the United States and Canada in the fall of 1873, in search of a suitable home. As a result, a large wave of immigration began in 1874, following a series of land-purchase arrangements with the Santa Fe. Over two thousand Mennonite immigrants chose Harvey, Marion, McPherson, and Reno counties as their home, since the land and climate were similar to the regions they had farmed in south Russia. Those who moved to Kansas made a major impact on the prairie state, as they bought about one hundred thousand acres of railroad land as well as a number of already established farms. The success of the first immigrants in central Kansas served to draw later waves of immigrants in following years.

Regarding the arrival of the first Mennonite settlers, one Kansas newspaper lauded the "hard-working foreigners" and their potential contributions to the industrial and agricultural productivity of central Kansas:

> Next summer will show wonderful changes in the region between the Cottonwood and Little Arkansas rivers, till now almost devoid of habitations. Even now the busy hum has begun. Long lines of wagons with lumber, household goods, and farm implements, are passing out from the railroad stations. The carpenters are busy putting up their first temporary shelter.[46]

Among the privileges received by area Mennonites from the Santa Fe was free transportation of building materials from the Mississippi River for a period of one year.[47]

For Newton, the coming of the Mennonites in the mid-1870's meant significant business opportunities. Newton became the trading and service center for Mennonites living within a twenty-five mile radius, including those who settled at Halstead, Goessel, and Moundridge. As increasing numbers of the German-speaking Mennonites came into town to buy lumber, farm machinery and other goods, local businessmen and residents became acquainted with the new settlers and their ethnic culture. The Mennonites' influence on the Kansas prairie, particularly with regard to wheat farming, has long been recognized. Newspaper publisher Noble Prentis, upon returning to Newton after an absence of seven years, wrote in 1882:

> A great change has taken place in the country since my last visit. I left bare prairie; I returned to find a score of miniature forests in sight from any point of view. The wheat and cornfields were unfenced of course, but several acres around every house were set in hedges, orchards, lanes, and alleys of trees . . . We drove for miles with many Mennonite houses in sight, and the most promising orchards, and immense fields of the greenest wheat.[48]

The Mennonites, who harvested Turkey Red

wheat, were not the first immigrants to bring hard winter wheat to the Kansas prairies. The significance of their contribution was the introduction of wheat to Kansas lands on a large scale, as well as innovative farming methods. As a consequence, the growth and prominence of the milling industry in the area has been attributed to the Mennonites, and particularly the efforts of Mennonite leader Bernhard Warkentin, who pioneered in the milling industry beginning in 1873 southwest of Newton at Halstead. In 1886 he established the Newton Milling and Elevator Co. and established his home at 211 E. First in Newton.[49]

Warkentin's experimentation with different varieties of wheat demonstrated the suitability of hard winter wheat for Kansas, and in the 1880's the state benefited from the importation of seed wheat from Russia, begun through a cooperative effort between Warkentin and Mark Carlton, a representative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. By the 1880's a major technological change for Newton's economy was the introduction of corrugated steel roller mills to replace the old steam grist mills. Prior to the turn of the century, the largest mills constructed in Newton included the Monarch Mill (bought by Warkentin in 1886), and John Dick's Harvey County Mills, constructed in 1892 along East Sixth. As the industry grew, other mills built included the Eagle Milling Co. in 1904 at Broadway and Pine, and Claassen's Mill, established in 1907 on East Sixth. Finally, a relative latecomer to the community in the milling industry, Goerz Flour Mills, began in 1917 and continues in operation today as Ross Industries.[50]

The Santa Fe and Harvey House

Major changes in Newton's railroad establishment occurred during the early decades of Newton's history. Newton's identity began with its associations as a railroad town, and through 1870

A detail of the restored dormer windows and Mansard roof of the Old Mill.

On the left, the Clark Hotel, and on the right, the Arcade, Newton's second railroad station and first Harvey House. For a time Fred Harvey also leased the Clark Hotel.

the community enjoyed its status as division headquarters for the Santa Fe. But in 1879 railroad officials made a decision to move their division point forty-three miles west to Nickerson.[51] Despite this loss, Newton's boosters stepped up their efforts to promote the town's railroad interests. The new decade opened with promise. A new depot and hotel, the Arcade, was constructed between 1880 and 1882 by the firm of Muse & Spivey, for a sum of 75,000 dollars. The new three story stone and brick railroad building was hailed as "the finest in the state, if not in the West." The Arcade Hotel, leased by entrepreneur Fred Harvey, accommodated guests in 120 rooms.[52]

In 1882 the Santa Fe built a roundhouse, and during the next several years Newton and neighboring communities scrambled to attract expanded train lines to the area. In March of 1882, a controversial railroad bond issue resulted in fraudulent voting and threatened violence between the rival towns of Newton, Burrton, and Sedgwick.[53] Newton's boosters were successful in expanding the community's railroad services to include Jay Gould's line, the St. Louis, Fort Scott & Wichita from El Dorado, and a new station was built at the corner of Sixth and Kansas Avenue in 1886. The Missouri Pacific bought the railroad a year later. The platform remaining today along Kansas Avenue gives evidence of the original inlaid brick.

The Santa Fe Depot was completed in 1930. The third Santa Fe station in Newton, it has been popularly described as a replica of Shakespeare's theatre or house.

Harvey County voters also passed bonds to induce other railroads to extend their lines to Newton in the 1880's, including the Ellsworth, McPherson, Newton & Southeastern, Newton & Northwestern (both branches of the Missouri Pacific), Kansas & Rio Grande, and the Chicago, St. Joseph, & Fort Worth.[54]

Although Newton's boosters got few of the railroads they sought, the community was unquestionably a railroad town, and some businessmen began to look for a way to attract the Santa Fe's division headquarters back to Newton. Organized efforts to achieve this goal came in 1894 when the railroad indicated that it would consider moving its division point if an adequate water supply could be established. The Commercial Club, a group of civic leaders, professionals and businessmen, was formed during that year to seek a solution to Newton's water problems. At that time Sand Creek served the community but was an inadequate source. Members of the Commercial Club were eventually successful in developing a new water system after drilling test wells along the Little Arkansas River, and they established a site for the water works at Mission, along the west branch of Emma Creek. A second source of water was found along a bed of the Smoky Hill River in Harvey County.[55]

These new sources of water for Newton assured a surge in the economy of the town as Commercial Club leaders negotiated with the railroad management. The deal struck for bringing the division headquarters back to Newton in 1897 involved an offer by the town for the Santa Fe to use the water at no charge for a period of seven years. The Commercial Club also offered more than one hundred building lots to Santa Fe employees who owned homes in Nickerson and needed to relocate their families as the railroad shops were moved to Newton. Among the buildings established in Newton by the Santa Fe at that time was a thirty-two stall roundhouse.[56]

The Santa Fe continued as the largest employer in Newton throughout the 1950's. A related enterprise, the Fred Harvey system, became Newton's next largest industry. After earning a reputation of serving good meals to railroad employees and travelers in Topeka beginning in 1876. Harvey opened the first "Harvey House," a combined hotel and restaurant in Florence along the Santa Fe line. Newton's Arcade was the next Harvey House, and from there the legendary entrepreneur expanded his interests westward to branches in New Mexico and finally, California. His chain of quality restaurants and hotels and

The 200 block of North Main features some of the oldest commercial buildings in Newton, including this one at 204 N. Main, used in the 1880's as a grocery store. A second-story apartment is distinguished by its dormer roof and by the brick arch above the front window. Above the arch, a series of corbels project from the side of the wall to support the brick.

On the northwest corner of Fifth and Main is the old Randall Building, erected in the 1880's as a department store. Later it was occupied by the J. C. Penney Company, the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, and most recently, a furniture Store. The south side entrance is rich in detad and is highlighted by a keystone over the stairway. Above the entrance is decorative moulding, with carved stone brackets and dentils. Running bond is the pattern used for the brick wall, extending to the rusticated design along the corner of the second story.

his system for serving the railroad clientele became internationally acclaimed.

Newton's place in the Harvey system was significant primarily for its longevity—the oldest continuous Harvey House, its operations lasting from 1882 to 1955. First established at the Arcade Hotel, the Harvey House later served customers at the Clark Hotel at Fourth and Main, and finally in the present Santa Fe depot building at Fifth and Main, which was completed in 1930.[57] In addition to the memorable meals and reasonable prices, the Harvey legacy was indebted to the service provided by the famous "Harvey Girls"—young women of only "good character" who assisted travelers along the Santa Fe route. The girls invariably wore black shoes and stockings, a black dress, and tied their hair with white ribbons. Several who worked in Newton still reside in the community.[58] The adventures of the Harvey Girls were popularized in a book of the same name, and Hollywood's portrayal, starring Judy Garland, was released in 1945.[59]

Following the return of the Santa Fe division headquarters to Newton in 1897, the Harvey management decided to make Newton a production and distribution center for points as far west as Albuquerque. By 1901, the entire system included fifteen hotels, forty-seven restaurants, and thirty dining cars. Approximately half of the Harvey locations were served by the Newton supplies. Harvey interests in Newton included poultry and dairy operations, a carbonation plant and bottling works, a packing plant, and a massive steam laundry business.[60]

Industry and Business Establishments

By the turn of the century, Newton's Main Street reflected the character of a busy midwestern railroad and milling town. The street itself was quite wide, and not yet paved. It provided access for wheat farmers to the town's four mills and grain elevators. During the summer months,

horse-drawn loads of wheat entered the town in steady succession. At Fourth Street, thirteen railroad tracks crossed Main at an angle, bordered by the roundhouse to the west and the Santa Fe depot, yards, and central offices. Among Newton's industries, two of the largest were competitors, J. J. Krehbiel's Carriage Factory on East Sixth, and the Tiffany Bros. Carriage Factory (later named the Newton Buggy Co.), at the corner of Ash and First. Both originated in 1883-84, and were important Newton industries into the first years of the twentieth century. Smaller factories in the 1890's included the Newton Yeast Factory near the corner of Sixth and Oak and Winger's Soap Factory at 219 Main. The Newton Broom Factory, located at 118 East Third, operated from approximately 1901 to 1909.[61]

The Ragsdale Opera House, constructed in 1885, had replaced the old opera house and stood in the center of Newton as the community's most impressive structure. The massive three-story red brick and stone building at the northwest corner of Main and Broadway also housed businesses and, until 1912, Newton's post office. These offices were located on the ground level. The performance hall, which seated 840, occupied the west side of the second and third stories. Above the theater a winding staircase led to an observatory along the building's Mansard roof. From 1885 to 1914, the Ragsdale Opera House featured a wide range of entertainment. Plays, concerts, operas, minstrel and variety shows, slides and movies, and campaigning politicians were among the attractions enjoyed by Newton audiences.[62]

The main commercial district spread along Main from Third to Seventh, with an array of business establishments no longer a part of the streetscape: Fred Harvey's Arcade, Dickey Drug, Hanlin Mercantile Co., Fritz Printery, Western Book and Publishing Co., S. M. Swartz Lumber, Duff Furniture, Becker Grocery, the May Shoe Store, among others. Some of these buildings have been torn down, including Becker's Grocery, which stood across from the courthouse at the corner of Eighth and Main. Others are still in use: May's is now a beauty salon at 526 N. Main, Hanlin's is presently used by Cunningham's at 607 N. Main, and the Dickey building at 611 N. Main is occupied by Katydid. One of Newton's oldest family-run businesses, Anderson's Book and Office Supply, has occupied several buildings over the years. In 1900, Anderson's stood at 422 Main. During that year, Newton was featured in a "souvenir edition" of the *Western Journal of Commerce*, with short histories of prominent businesses and institutions, along with photographs of Newton's finest residences.[63]

The Ragsdale Opera House at the northwest corner of Main and Broadway before it was destroyed by fire in 1915.

Homes In Newton

Newton's residential neighborhoods at the turn of the century were well-defined, reflecting the "two-class" society which had evolved.[64] Black families lived in Newton as early as 1882, when they organized the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in a small rectangular building at 210 West Fifth. Another black church established during that decade, Second Baptist, still has an active membership. While Newton has never had a large black population, blacks for many years lived primarily along Eleventh and Twelfth streets, with the men employed to a large extent as porters, clerks, and in other service positions for the Santa Fe.

Greek and Italian railroad workers were among the Newton residents who lived on the fringes of the community—they were quartered in shacks west of Main, both north and south of the railroad tracks. Ethnic prejudice against these workers was strong among the townspeople, and by 1906, few remained in the community.[65] The Santa Fe during that time began to look to Mexico for labor, and in the summer of 1905 Newton's first three Mexican families arrived. The men were employed as section workers, laying railroad ties, and in subsequent years, particularly from 1917 to 1920, additional Mexican families joined the small settlement in Newton and worked for the Santa Fe.[66]

The Mexican community west of Main had as its nucleus the 600 block of West First, where the railroad constructed a cluster of section houses. Materials used for these barrack-like homes included railway ties and pine sealed with tar. Each unit contained fifteen rooms, measuring twelve square feet, with one family assigned to each room. These housing accommodations lasted until the 1920's, when they were replaced by brick modular units.[67]

In contrast to the lack of options available to the railroad workers, members of the business and professional community spread out from the center of town. One neighborhood extended along Main to the north, near Sand Creek. A particularly prominent neighborhood was established south of the tracks on East First, where neighbors included the Bernhard Warkentin and C. W. Claassen families, as well as Josiah Foltz, Newton's first fire chief. John Reese, Newton's first druggist, built his large residence there in 1878. At that time he owned the entire 300 block of East First, and gradually sold lots to others in the community. The Reese house featured a spiral

"Ambleside": The residence of Henry L. Hart, built in 1878 at 610 West Broadway.

staircase leading up to a small square lookout above the second story. Members of the Reese family owned the house until 1982.[68]

Two blocks north, the homes on East Third were popularly referred to as "cut-glass row."[69] In the 1870's the 300 block of East Third was the site of the first brick residence in town, built by S. J. Bentley, proprietor of the Newton House. Another house on the street during Newton's first years, had supposedly featured a tower used as a lookout for Indians.[70] At the turn of the century, substantial homes there were owned by William K. Smith, druggist, C. F. Claassen, banker, and within a few years, Rudolph Goerz, founder of Goerz Flour Mills.

Another neighborhood served a "country suburb" for affluent Newton residents. The row of large homes along West Broadway, today one of Newton's most striking residential areas, featured Victorian, Queen Anne, and Italianate styles, with ornate trim and carefully landscaped gardens. A few blocks to the east, Isaiah Yocum had earlier built the first plastered house in town, at 119 East Broadway. The posh homes along West Broadway were built primarily with wood frames and clapboard, most often on a cut limestone foundation. Many of these homes were built between 1883 and 1900, and limestone foundations were prevalent during that era. The mortar used by masons was lime-filled, and posed the problem of crumbling when exposed to moisture. Other common features of these homes were oak flooring, and either brick or stone fireplaces.[71] Among these fine homes was the Ambleside estate at 610 West Broadway, built in 1878 by Henry L. Hart. The house still stands today, at 1 Ambleside. Several of the homes originally built in the country were later moved closer to Main.[72]

The Building Process: "Carpenter Eclecticism"

Less elaborate homes in Newton, especially the earlier ones, were constructed with the balloon frame method, popular because it was an inexpensive and quick way to build structures in western frontier communities like Newton. The method was simple and required few tools: two-by-fours were nailed together, covered with siding, and erected in a cottage style with predominantly gabled roofs. Brick residences were less numerous because of the higher cost, although brick homes in Newton were constructed with factory-produced rather than individually-made bricks. The nearest kiln was located northwest at Hoisington, Kansas. Beginning in 1895, Newton's major supplier for brick and stone was the Brining Coal Co., located at 112 West Sixth. Brick was not a feature of most homes until it became popular in the 1920's and 1930's to incorporate brick with wood for exterior trim and porches. Another later feature of both commercial dwell-

The crew of James Fox Building Contractors.

ings and residences was the use of factory-produced concrete building tiles, preferred by builders because of the low cost and fire-resistant qualities.[73]

Another change in the construction business over the years involved the type of lumber most commonly used, a factor determined both by practicality and availability. Unlike the earliest days of Newton's frenzied building activity, when white pine was shipped in for nearly all construction, builders switched during the next several decades to yellow pine timber, a product of the southern states. By the 1920's, lumber was brought in primarily from the northwest, especially cedar and pine, with some cyprus arriving from the south.[74]

Several of Newton's early homes have been given stylistic labels in architectural studies.[75] Most of Newton's homes dating to 1900 and earlier, however, cannot be easily categorized as demonstrating a specific architectural style. A range of ideas and styles were gradually incorporated into the building process. Very few, if any, early Newton homes were designed by architects. Lower class houses were built by carpenters who used only a few variations on several basic floor plans. For more expensive and extensive homes, owners and carpenters worked together on plans, borrowing liberally from houses the owners had lived in earlier or had taken note of during travels. Throughout the construction process, owners and carpenters modified details, and sometimes, upon completion of a project, a smaller addition or remodeling task would be commissioned immediately. Local architect Keith Rhoades has suggested that in characterizing Newton's houses, "carpenter eclecticism" perhaps comes closest to describing the process by which many early homes were designed.[76]

Information regarding builders in Newton is scarce, although it is likely that as early as the mid 1870's a transition was made from hiring out-of-town carpenters and contractors for commercial buildings to hiring local builders. Newton city directories indicate that the building trades comprised a substantial source of employment for Newton's heads of households. The earliest known directory, published in 1885, listed thirty-four carpenters, eighteen masons and plasterers, eighteen painters, three lumber companies, and one house mover. One resident, A. Brewer, was listed as a contractor and builder. Two years later, during Newton's building boom, the 1887 directory added two more entries to the occupation of contractor—C. L. Myers and the Hanna Brothers. As the town gained in population, the construction business fared well, and within twenty years, Newton boasted five contracting firms and one architect.[77]

Although few buildings in Newton were designed with architect-drawn plans prior to 1900, one most notable exception is the Bethel College building, begun in 1888 on the prairie just north of Newton. The choice of location of the college came after months of competing bids between two factions in Newton, one of which hoped to attract the building project to a site south of the community. The Mennonite founders of the new college hired the architectural firm of William T. Proudfoot and George W. Bird, a young Wichita team whose other Kansas buildings included Davis Hall of Friends University and Wichita's City Hall. Proudfoot and Bird left Kansas even before the Bethel College building was completed, and they gained a reputation of excellence in later years.[78]

The striking Bethel College building, built of Kansas limestone in the style of Romanesque revival attracted the attention of the community from the very beginning. Local residents had more than adequate time to spend viewing the solitary building, particularly since it stood unfinished for three years while funding for the project stalled. During the summer of 1890, the editor of the *Kansan* reported, "Bethel College is now the attraction, as large numbers of our citizens drive out every evening to note the progress of construction."[79]

Travelers on the Santa Fe approaching Newton had opportunity to view the unusual, castle-like building. One admirer wrote, "I saw from the railway trains the rising walls of the dream-building shining in the sun, and then the enclosing roof, a work of art."[80]

The establishment of a college close to the community underscored the need for adequate transportation. Two years prior to the cornerstone laying ceremonies at Bethel, four Newton businessmen had formed the Newton Street Railway System, and lines were built during the boom years 1886 and 1887. The streetcar service included eight cars drawn by horses and mules, and headquarters were located on West Broadway, near Main. The lines ran the length of Main from First to Bethel College, east and west along Broadway, and east along First to Greenwood Cemetery. Operations ceased for financial reasons in 1890.[81]

Into the Twentieth Century: An Eye Towards "Progress"

Two decades passed until Newton promoters again arranged for city transportation. The Arkansas Valley Interurban (AVI) began servicing Newton in 1911. In the fall of 1913, tracks were completed to Bethel College, following the construction of a concrete bridge over Sand Creek on Main.[82] This venture was more complex than the earlier street railway, for the AVI provided freight and passenger service to Wichita and Hutchinson, as well as Newton. A depot was built by the company on West Fifth, and the street car service operated in and beyond Newton until the mid-1930's and disbanded in 1943. The line extending north to Bethel College discontinued service in 1926.[83]

At the same time, a more enduring transportation revolution was taking place. The community's first automobile appeared in 1904, and the paving of city streets began five years later. A few city blocks had been macadamized as early as 1879,

The Arkansas Valley Interurban street car service reached the Bethel College campus in 1913.

but most of the town remained unpaved into the new century.[84] Other city improvements, reflecting the progressive aspirations of civic leaders, included the new county courthouse building in 1907, and completion in 1913 of the city auditorium at Sixth and Poplar.[85] Samuel Greenebaum, a "native son" of Newton, designed the auditorium, as well as the 1914 Newton High School on West Seventh, presently part of Santa Fe Middle School. In 1925 Greenebaum's Kansas City-based architectural firm completed plans for the Railroad Savings and Loan building and Newton's Hotel Ripley.[86]

The Commercial Club, the group which had formed in 1894 and worked to attract the Santa Fe headquarters back to Newton, was the forerunner of Newton's Chamber of Commerce, formally established in 1920.[87] The early civic organization took responsibility for promoting a broad range of city improvements, including the replacement of the old wooden sidewalks with concrete. "Booster Day" was inaugurated in 1909, an occasion for Commercial Club members to travel "in caravans from town to town publicizing Newton."[88]

Among the cultural and social events which the boosters promoted were special engagements, such as performances by the St. Paul and Minneapolis Symphonies, recitals by Metropolitan Opera tenor Orville Harrold, a former Newton resident, and an address by Helen Keller.[89] Musicians and travelling shows performing at the Opera House lodged at Fred Harvey's Arcade. A few blocks from the Opera House, on East Fifth, stood an old wooden building which served as a lecture hall during the winter months. William Jennings Bryan spoke there on several occasions. During the summers, traveling groups from Chautauqua, New York, stopped in Newton along their tours of midwestern communities, and presented entertainment and "culture" in the form of concerts, drama, and lectures.[90] Local residents flocked to these special events, and during the years from 1900 to 1920, Newton experienced a proliferation of voluntary associations aimed towards intellectual and cultural improvement of the community.[91]

Newton's civic leaders had ample opportunity to raise the consciousness of the community on several occasions when tragedy struck. The city experienced a number of fires after 1900, many originating in and around livery stables. The most extensive fire in the city's history, during the summer of 1914, razed nearly an entire block of business buildings between Fifth and Sixth, east of Main. A headline accompanying the front page coverage of the loss urged, "Now is the Time to Boost Newton."[92] Major fires between 1908 and 1915 resulted in extensive rebuilding efforts,

The Old Railroad Savings and Loan Building, 500 Main, was built in 1925. A structure of the American Renaissance, it features Palladian windows and two-story Corinthian pilasters.

and the destruction by fire of local landmarks like the Ragsdale Opera House on New Years Day, 1915, forever altered the landscape of Newton's downtown district.[93]

Major fires are among the most graphic illustrations of how the urban environment has been altered. The character of the built environment has undergone more subtle, but pervasive, changes as well. Technological advancement and the push for "progress" and "civic improvement," particularly in the opening decades of this century, brought a slow transformation of Newton's commercial district. One observation by a local reporter in the early 1960's may be interpreted today as an expression of lament by those interested in the preservation of the community: ". . . in the thirty years from 1900 to 1930, Newton, as it is today, really began. The shell which had been promoted and built by pioneer hands was torn down, piece by piece, or extensively remodeled."[94]

Newton in Retrospect: History and Historic Preservation

The thrust towards progress is a reminder that the forces affecting Newton's landscape were reflective of wider trends in countless American communities. In his provocative essay "Symbolic Landscapes," cultural geographer D. W. Meinig has described the stereotypical Main Street of the midwest as

> . . . lined with three or four-story red brick business blocks, whose rather ornate fenestrations and cornices reveal their nineteenth-century origins. Above the storefronts and awnings are the offices of lawyers, doctors, and dentists and above these the meeting rooms of the various fraternal orders. A courthouse, set apart on its own block, may be visible . . . close by is the academy and perhaps a small denominational college. The residential area begins with big Italianate and Victorian houses on tree-shaded lots and grades out to lesser but still comfortable homes. On the other side of town, below the depot, are the warehouses and small factories. All around it lies a prosperous farming country.[95]

Historic Newton resembled this idealized version in many respects. And yet, the community encompassed both people and buildings which, if not central to the community mainstream, nevertheless contributed diverse and alternative cultural values. Beyond and in addition to Main Street, which possessed its own historic and cultural meanings, other events and values have contributed to the community's distinctiveness. In Newton, historic preservation requires appreciation for the historic link to the cattle trade, as well as land-use patterns (i.e., the arrangement of town plats and blocks). Immigration, too, played a significant role in the history of Newton, with settlements first from Russia, and later, from Mexico. Another element of Newton's cultural landscape is the historic connection to a way of life which no longer exists—the hub of railways and the renowned Fred Harvey system.

Finally, Newton's landscape is bound in significant ways to the surrounding land and production of crops, particularly wheat.[96]

Over the years, many organizations and individuals in the community have promoted interest in local history. The Harvey County Historical Society, founded in 1907, has collected and preserved a large body of materials pertaining to the history of the community, including extensive newspaper and photograph collections. The presence of Bethel College in North Newton has served as a stimulus for research on local history topics. The Mennonite Library and Archives catalogs papers and documents on community history and houses an oral history collection. West of the campus, the recently re-opened Kauffman Museum complex features exhibits relating to Mennonite life and culture, including interpretive displays about prairie life.[97]

Other institutions have long been active in publicizing the community's heritage and have in many ways shaped community events. Efforts began in 1894 by Commercial Club members who took a large share of responsibility for civic affairs and the local environment have been continued by Newton's Chamber of Commerce and other civic groups. Newton's newspaper establishment has also been instrumental in promoting the community's heritage. The *Newton Kansan*, the town's earliest promoter of local events, published a special anniversary edition in 1922, a document rich in photographic, biographical, and historical material. Later special editions focusing on history followed, during the Kansas and Newton centennial celebrations of 1961 and 1971, with occasional articles appearing in more recent years.

These events, particularly Newton's observance of its century of history, as well as the 1974 Mennonite centennial, served as impetus for a renewed surge of local historical interest. Along with the anniversaries of local congregations and voluntary organizations, these celebrations have played an important role in the education of younger generations of Newton residents regard-

The main entranceway to the Old Railroad Savings and Loan Building features a carved stone architrave with egg and dart type moulding, and above it, carved griffins.

The First Presbyterian Church, completed in 1905, stood on the 700 block of Main until it was torn down in 1962.

ing the community's historic resources. One recent local happening—the creation of the Mexican Heritage Room at the Harvey County Historical Society—points towards a broadening scope of historical consciousness in Newton.

The preservation of local landmarks in recent years reflects the impact and growth of the historic preservation movement. A body of federal legislation beginning in the 1960's encouraged communities to identify and preserve their archeological, architectural and historic resources. The construction of a new city hall and county courthouse in 1964 and the destruction of the landmark Harvey County Courthouse, an outstanding example of Richardsonian Romanesque design, are symbolic of the casual regard for preservation in urban planning in the 1960's. The National Preservation Act functioned as a catalyst for communities in meeting building needs, as historical and aesthetic values became higher priorities in city planning. One result was that local buildings of historic significance, but in disrepair, became cause for concern by local residents. Not all such buildings were saved from destruction—Newton's old brick land office, for example, located south of the tracks on the west side of Main, was finally bulldozed after initial restoration plans failed to attract the necessary financial

The Carnegie Library at 203 Main was constructed in 1903-1904 with funds provided by Andrew Carnegie. It served the community until 1973, and is presently operated by the Harvey County Historical Society.

The old Harvey County Courthouse.

backing.[98] Another historic building in Newton which attracted some, but not enough interest in restoration, was the old stone industrial building on West First at the Santa Fe tracks, former home of the Newton Buggy Company dating from the mid 1880's.[99]

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to develop and maintain the National Register of Historic Places, and provided guidelines for a network of related preservation programs. Five buildings in Newton are presently listed on the National Register: The Warkentin Mill, Warkentin House, Carnegie Library, Old Railroad Savings and Loan Building, and the Neal House at 301 East Fourth. The Bethel College Administration Building in North Newton is also listed.

As the preservation laws become more familiar and communities begin to feel their effects, local and state-wide groups around the country have organized to promote preservation projects. In Newton, Preservation of Kansas Landmarks, Inc., organized in 1970 to restore and open the Warkentin House to the public. The Victorian home with its gazebo and carriage house became a celebrated resource in the community, and three years later, a group of Newton residents began efforts to save the deteriorating Warkentin Flour Mill. The project was completed after Newton businessman Lloyd Smith bought the mill and restored the roofline and windows to authentic Mansard design, with the aid of original blueprints and photographs. The Old Mill now serves the community as a restaurant with an adjoining office complex.

Currently, several other visible preservation projects are underway in Newton. The Santa Fe donated the Newton depot to Prairie View Mental Health Center in 1982. Since then, Prairie View has undertaken a major renovation project at the historic station, cleaning the brick and stone exterior and remodeling the interior in order to house a restaurant as well as professional and business offices. Several historic homes are undergoing restoration, including the large home built by John Reese on East First, one of Newton's oldest residences.

With these projects and others, the community has become involved in a range of preservation-related activities, as residents continue to explore the heritage and unique character of the community's past, and plan for a future which is sensitive to and utilizes historic and architectural resources. In view of recent preservation legislation and increased tax incentives, many communities are turning to downtown preservation as a way to salvage shrinking central business

W. J. Rich and Co., pictured about 1912. The firm, located at 115-117 West Broadway, sold hardware, farm implements, buggies, wagons, and automobiles.

districts. As preservationist Carol J. Galbreath writes, "Strengthening culture systems results from using older buildings to serve contemporary needs or reinterpreting a traditional building form in modern architecture. Historic preservation becomes a mechanism for promoting cultural continuity."[100]

Local residents recently responded to a community-wide survey and many indicated their desire for preservation projects in Newton. With the Historic Preservation Survey Project beginning in the summer of 1983, more than forty volunteers from the community participated in a "first step"—an inventory of thirty-seven blocks of the downtown and surrounding residental areas—forming the basis for future preservation efforts. As Newton plans for the decades ahead, changes in the landscape will need to reflect a heightened awareness of the historic preservation movement, and concern for the conservation of local historic, architectural and cultural resources.

ENDNOTES

[1] Floyd Benjamin Streeter, *The Kaw: The Heart of a Nation* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1941), p. 128.

[2] John D. Waltner, "The Process of Civilization of the Kansas Frontier, Newton, Kansas, 1871-1873," M.A. Thesis Univ. of Kansas 1968, p. 10.

[3] *History of Harvey County 1871-1881* (1882; rpt. Newton, KS: Harvey County Historical Society, 1883), pp. 1-5.

[4] p. 2.

5 p. 2.
6 "Indians Were Here!" *Newton, Kansas*, 28 January 1961, p. 5.
7 "Buffalo Had Left Region in 1873, says Kansan," *Wichita Eagle*, 30 Dec. 1925.
8 Muse, p. 23.
9 William T. Moran, *Santa Fe and the Chisholm Trail* (Newton, KS: William T. Moran, 1971), p. 44; Irene Schroeder, "Early Days In Newton," 1970, p. 1, in possession of the author.
10 Moran, pp. 59-60.
11 Muse, pp. 23-24.
12 "Samuel Lehman Was Early Day Newton Businessman," *Kansan*, 16 Oct. 1971, sec. 6, p. 9; "Lehman Hardware and Implement Company," *Kansan*, 22 Aug. 1922, p. 19.
13 Moran, p. 60. Moran's chapter "Newton Now and Then," pp. 59-66 gives more detailed information on early Newton businesses.
14 Streeter, p. 149.
15 Schroeder, p. 2.
16 Waltner, p. 15.
17 Waltner, pp. 14-15.
18 Muse, p. 24.
19 Waltner, pp. 16-17.
20 Waltner, p. 23
21 Waltner, pp. 34-35.
22 Streeter, p. 150; Waltner, p. 16.
23 Schroeder, p. 2.
24 A. T. Andreas, *History of the State of Kansas* (1883; rpt. Atchison, KS: Atchison County Historical Society, 1976), p. 773.
25 Muse, pp. 24-25.
26 Muse, pp. 25-27; Moran, pp. 51-58; Waltner pp. 46-47, and Streeter, pp. 149-159. The most analytical account of the Massacre and violence in early Newton is Clayton Koppes' "Law and Order on the Moving Frontier: The Case of Newton, Kansas, 1871-75." Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, KS. Hereafter cited as MLA.
27 Matthew Braun, *Kinch* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975).
28 John C. Johnston, quoted in "From the 'Hell Town' of Kansas to a Thriving City of 10,000." *The Kansas City Star*, 15 Feb. 1925, col. 1.
29 "Killing of Town Marshal Prompted Formation of Newton Lodge." *Kansan*, 16 Oct. 1971, sec. 6, p. 8.
30 "Transition of a 'Cow Town' to the Present Modern, Beautiful Newton," *Kansan*, 22 Aug. 1922, p. 34.
31 "The Organization of Harvey County Accomplished Feb. 29, 1872," *Kansan*, 22 Aug. 1922, p. 18.
32 Koppes, p. 18.
33 Koppes, p. 19.
34 Koppes, p. 20.
35 Quoted in "Grasshoppers, Other Curses Failed to Prevent Progress." *Kansan*, 28 Jan. 1961, p. 4.
36 "Buffalo Wallows Located in Area," *Kansan*, 16 Oct. 1971, p. 13.
37 Quoted in "From the 'Hell Town' of Kansas to a Thriving City of 10,000," col. 1.
38 "Buffalo Had Left Region in 1873, Says Kansan"; Carol Angood, "Trees and Houses Non-Existent When Early Settlers Arrived Here, Newtonians Recall," *Kansan*, 2 Nov. 1967, pp. 1, 3.
39 Muse, p. 6.
40 Angood, p. 3.
41 "Killing of Town Marshall," sec. 6, p. 8.
42 Andreas, p. 774; Mary Jeanine Fent, "Ragsdale Opera House—Newton, Kansas, 1885-1915," M.A. Thesis Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 1977, p. 3.
43 "Harvey County," *Kansan*, 30 Jan. 1879, p. 4.
44 "Revival of a Kansas Town," 28 Apr. 1899, *Weekly Kansas Republican*, p. 1, cols. 1-2.
45 Fent, p. 25.
46 "Mennonite Land Acquisitions Recalled," *Kansan*, 15 Oct. 1974.
47 L. L. Waters, *Steel Trails to Santa Fe* (Lawrence University of Kansas Press, 1950), p. 233
48 p. 235
49 "Bernhard Warkentin Best Remembered for Bringing Wheat to Area," *Kansan*, 16 Oct. 1971, p. 11.
50 "Growth of Milling Industry in Harvey County Was Sure to Come," *Kansan*, 16 Oct. 1971, sec. 6, p. 2; "Bernhard Warkentin Remembered Best for Bringing Wheat to Area," p. 11; "Milling Industry—A Monument to B. Warkentin, Founder," *Kansan*, 22 Aug. 1922, pp. 100-101; "The Goerz Flour Mills Company," *Kansan*, 22 Aug. 1922, p. 52; and David A. Haury, "Bernhard Warkentin: A Mennonite Benefactor," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 49 (1975), 197-202.
51 "Revival of a Kansas Town," p. 1.
52 Andres, p. 774.
53 "1880's New Railroad Boom Years in Kansas," *Kansan*, 28 Jan. 1961, p. 8
54 "1880's Were Railroad Boom Years," p. 8; "How Newton Got the Missouri Pacific Railway," *Kansan*, 22 Aug 1922, p. 88.
55 "Discovery of Water Supply Cost City of Newton $13,50," *Kansan*, 16 Oct. 1971, sec. 6, p. 2; "Santa Fe Railway Still Plays Major Role in Newton's History," *Kansan*, 16 Oct. 1971, sec. 6, p. 13.
56 "Santa Fe Railway Still Plays Major Role," p. 13; "Revival of a Kansas Town," p. 1.
57 "Fred Harvey Maintains Vast Interests In Newton." *Kansan*, 22 Aug. 1922, pp. 124-25; "Harvey House Was Newton Landmark," *Kansan*, 16 Oct. 1971, sec. 6, p. 8; "Arcade Hotel Is Finally Closed," *Evening Kansan-Republican*, 16 March 1926, p. 1; Waters, pp. 261-265.
58 Bernice Graves, "Newton Woman Recalls Harvey House Days," *Kansan*, 17 July 1971, pp. 1, 5; "Santa Fe Station Donated to Prairie View," *The Prairie View*, 22, No. 2 (1983), p. 3.
59 Samuel Hopkins Adams, *The Harvey Girls* (New York: Random House, 1942), See "The Harvey Girls' Opens," *The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968*, Vol. III (New York: New York Times and Arno Press, 1970), pp. 2099-2100.
60 "Fred Harvey Maintains Vast Interests in Newton," p. 125.
61 See Sanborn Insruance Company Maps, 1884-1909, MLA.
62 Fent, pp. 2-8; 90-95
63 *Western Journal of Commerce*, (n.p.: n.p., 1900), entire.
64 Elva Krehbiel Leisy, "Remembering," Vol. I, 1979, p. 72, MLA.
65 "Railroad News," *Evening Kansan-Republican*, 17 Feb. 1906, p. 3.
66 "First Mexican Families Arrived in Newton In Summer of 1905," *Kansan*, 16 Oct. 1971, sec. 6, p. 10.
67 Claudia Limbert, "The Invisible People: A Study of the Mexican American Community in Newton, Kansas," 1978, p. 17, MLA.
68 Telephone Interview with Naomi Reese, Newton, KS. 4 May 1984.
69 Telephone Interview with Norma Walker, Newton, KS, 2 Apr. 1984.
70 Frances A. Loewen, "Nineteenth Century Architecture: Newton, Kansas," 1972, p. 18, MLA.
71 "Architectural Study of Newton, Kansas," *Schowalter Oral History Collection*, Interview of Keith Rhoades by Dawn Dodgion, 27 Jan. 1981, MLA.
72 Leisy, p. 72; Loewen, pp. 19-24. Newton resident Clarissa Oison researched the history of homes along the 300 and 400 blocks of West Broadway for the Newton Historic Preservation Survey Project, Aug. 1984.
73 "The S. M. Swartz Co. 'On the Square,' " *Kansan*, 22 Aug. 1922, p. 32.
74 "The S. M. Swartz Co.," p. 32.
75 Newton Area Chamber of Commerce, et. al., *Historic Tour of Newton* (Newton, KS: Chamber of Commerce, 1983); Loewen, pp. 18-27.
76 Keith Rhoades Interview, 27 Jan. 1981.
77 W. E. Dockson, comp., *Directory of the Cities of Newton, Halstead and Sedgwick* (Newton, KS: W. E. Dockson, 1885); William M. Crichton and Frank P. Kelly, comps., *Directory, City of Newton* (Newton, KS: Crichton and Kelly, 1887); *Prewitt's Newton, Kansas Directory* (Springfield, MO: Prewitt Directory Co., 1907).
78 "A Castle on the Plains," *Bethel College Bulletin*, 70, No. 2, (1984), pp. 2, 4; Bron Schmidt, "Castle on the Plains: A History of the Life and Times of the Bethel College Administration Building," Slide Presentation, 1983, MLA.
79 *Kansan*, 21 Aug. 1890, p. 1.
80 T. J. Norton, "Some Recollections of Early Days, *Kansan*, 22 Aug. 1922, p. 31.
81 "Newton Street Railway—Product and Victim of Boom Days," *Kansan*, 22 Aug. 1922, p. 83, Moran, p. 90.
82 "Transition of a 'Cow Town.' " p. 36.
83 Peter J. Wedel, *The Story of Bethel College*, ed. Edmund G. Kaufman (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 1954), pp. 214-216.
84 "Transition of a 'Cow Town,' " p. 36; Norton, p. 31.
85 "Transition of a 'Cow Town,' " p. 37.
86 "The Story of How Newton Built Her Modern Hotel," *Evening Kansan-Republican*, 15 Mar. 1926, p. 1, col. 2.
87 "Newton C. of C. Formed in 1894," *Kansan*, 16 Oct. 1971, sec. 5, col. 1.
88 "Newton Joined 'Cement Age' In Early 1900's," *Kansan*, 28 Jan. 1961, p. 6, col. 4
89 "The Adair Haberdashery," *Kansan*, 22 Aug. 1922, p. 40.
90 Leisy, pp. 90-92.
91 Leisy, p. 90. For brief histories of many of these organizations see the following special editions of the *Kansan*: Fiftieth Anniversary, 22 Aug. 1922; Kansas Centennial, 28 Jan. 1961; and Newton Centennial, 16 Oct. 1971.
92 "Fire Destroys a Block of Business Buildings," *Evening Kansan-Republican*, 4 Aug. 1914, p. 1.
93 "Newton Has Lost $20,000 a Year for 50 Years by Fire," *Kansan*, 22 Aug. 1922, p. 81; Moran, p. 92.
94 "Newton Joined 'Cement Age' In Early 1900's," p. 6.
95 In *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. D. W. Meinig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 167.
96 For a discussion of American landscapes and cultural values, see Carol J. Galbreath, "Criteria for Defining the Historic and Cultural Landscape," in *Selected Papers, Conference on Conserving the Historic and Cultural Landscape* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1975) pp. 1-9.
97 "Kauffman Museum: Looking Back," *Bethel College Bulletin*, 69, No. 3 (1983), p. 1.
98 "Landmark Disappears," *Kansan*, 11 Dec. 1971.
99 Virginia Whitefield, "'Carriage Factory' Crumbling but Memories Linger," *Kansan*, 2 Dec. 1972, pp. 1, 9.
100 "Communities Benefit From a Sense of History," *Small Town*, 5, No. 8 (1975), p. 6.